



POLICY TITLE:		Grandparent Caregivers Program	
 		CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY	
Approved By:	Date Approved:	Original Effective Date:	Last Revision:
Brenda Donald	April 26, 2019	April 26, 2019	March 5, 2021

I. AUTHORITY	The Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (“CFSA”) adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency’s mission and applicable federal and District of Columbia laws, rules and regulations, including the D.C. Official Code, Title 4, Sections 251.01-251.07 and Title 29, Chapter 68 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR).
II. APPLICABILITY	Grandparent Caregivers Program staff.
III. RATIONALE	<p>When compared to children in non-relative foster care, children in the care of their adult relatives have more stability. They are more likely to maintain connections with siblings, preserve their cultural heritage, and maintain community bonds.¹ According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, in 2019 there were 7,000 District children under the age of 18 living in grandparent led households. Many of these grandparents are older residents living on fixed income who have willingly taken on the responsibility of caring for their young relatives, and would benefit from financial assistance toward that end.</p> <p>CFSA’s Grandparent Caregivers Program provides a monthly subsidy to promote stability and family connections for children in the care of their young relatives. It is an investment that is designed to keep these children out of the formal child welfare system.</p>
IV. POLICY	<p>The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) administers the Grandparent Caregivers Program (GCP), which provides a monthly subsidy to eligible District of Columbia residents with low incomes who are raising their grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great nieces, or great nephews. Grandparent caregivers use this monetary support to offset the costs of caring for relative children residing with them in the District who might otherwise end up in the foster care system. Please see the Frequently Asked Questions for further information.</p> <p>Within this policy, the term “child” refers to anyone under age 18. The term “parent” means a person who has a parental relationship to the child. The term “caregiver” includes grandparent, great-grandparent, great-aunt, or great-uncle.</p>

¹ “Time for Reform: Support Relatives in Providing Foster Care and Permanent Families for Children.” Kids Are Waiting: Fix Foster Care Now and Generations United, Washington, DC. 2007 and Conway, Tiffany and Rutledge Q. Hudson. “Is Kinship Care Good for Kids?” Center for Law and Social Policy, Washington, DC. 2007

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VI. SECTIONS	<p>Section A: Eligibility Requirements for Grandparent Caregivers Program (GCP)</p> <p>A caregiver may be eligible to receive the GCP subsidy with proof of the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The caregiver is the natural, adoptive, or step grandparent, great-grandparent, great-aunt, or great-uncle. Proof of relationship is two-fold. First the caregiver must prove relationship between themselves and the parent and second a relationship between the parent and the child to whom the subsidy will be granted. Proof of the relationship is by one or more of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Birth certificate or decree of adoption b. Court determination of paternity c. Acknowledgement of Paternity (AOP) d. Child Support Agreement or Court Order e. Proof that parents were married at time of child's conception or birth f. Marriage certificate or proof of common law marriage g. DNA test results 2. Residency in the District of Columbia. 3. The child lives in the caregiver's home <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The caregiver has been the child's sole or primary caregiver b. The child's parent has not lived in the home with the child and caregiver, unless: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The caregiver is the child's standby guardian, or ii. The parent is a minor enrolled in school, or iii. The parent is a minor with a medically verifiable disability which prevents the parent from being able to care for the child. 4. The household income is below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. 5. The caregiver has applied for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for the child and an eligibility determination has been made. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of a subsidy a caregiver is eligible to receive shall be offset by any amount a caregiver receives as TANF or SSI for the child. 6. The caregiver and all adults residing in the home have submitted to a criminal background check and been "cleared", or an exception made.

	<p>Section B: Application Process</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Persons meeting the requirements in Section A who want to receive a GCP subsidy must apply with CFSA by completing the Application for Grandparent Caregivers Program Subsidy and provide the necessary proof of being the primary caregiver (see application for accepted documentation). The caregiver and all adults (18 years and older) residing in the home must submit to the clearance process which includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) check Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) clearance Child Protection Register (CPR) check for the past 5 years
	<p>Section C: Program Limitations</p> <p>The provision of a subsidy under the GCP is subject to the availability of appropriated funds.</p>
	<p>Section D: Annual Review of GCP Subsidies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> GCP staff shall complete a review once each calendar year, based upon the certification date for the GCP subsidy. Each review shall determine continuing the receipt of a subsidy based upon the following criteria: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing maintenance of eligibility requirements in Section A. Whether any change of circumstances requires possible modification or termination of a subsidy. For school age children, evidence of the child's enrollment and attendance at school. The GCP may also complete a review prior to the anniversary of the certification date in the event of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in subsidy rates Request for review by the caregiver Changes to the child's circumstances, including but not limited to possible changes in residence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The caregiver shall notify the GCP within 2 weeks of the occurrence of any change in the eligibility criteria and/or any change in address. If the child(ren) has/have not resided with the caregiver continuously for at least the most recent 6 months prior to application approval. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCP staff shall complete a review every 6 months. The GCP shall send out the <i>Recertification Package for Grandparent Caregivers Program Subsidy</i> 90 days prior to the annual review date. If the GCP has not heard from the caregiver prior to or on the date of the subsidy expiring, the CFSA shall continue to make efforts to contact the client to complete the recertification package within 15 days. If unsuccessful, the client's subsidy shall be terminated.

	<p>Section E: Termination of GCP Subsidies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A GCP subsidy shall be terminated under any of the following circumstances: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If at any point the caregiver fails to demonstrate compliance with any of the eligibility criteria outlined in Section A of this policy. b. If the caregiver has not responded to the notification for subsidy review by the recertification date, or otherwise fails to participate in the annual subsidy review. c. When the child turns 18. 2. Notice of termination shall be sent to the last known address by regular mail.
	<p>Section F: Appeal Process</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All caregivers receiving GCP subsidies shall be notified of the right to appeal a change in subsidy. 2. A caregiver aggrieved by a decision of CFSA in connection with the denial, reduction, suspension, or termination of a subsidy, including a failure to act on a request for review, may appeal the decision through a written request for a fair hearing. <i>For more information, see the Fair Hearings Policy.</i>
	<p>Section G: Transfer of Subsidy to a Relative Caregiver</p> <p>When a grandparent caregiver is no longer able to care for the child because of death or mental or physical incapacity, the subsidy may be transferred to a relative caregiver.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In order for the subsidy to be transferred to a relative caregiver, the relative caregiver must file an application for a subsidy within 30 days of becoming the child's primary caregiver and meet the requirements outlined in this policy or the Close Relative Caregiver Pilot Program administrative issuance. 2. A relative caregiver whose application for a subsidy transfer has been denied shall not be entitled to a fair hearing.